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OCCUPATIONS OF IMMIGRANTS BEFORE AND AFTER
COMING TO THE UNITED STATES

BY LOUIS BLOCH*

INTRODUCTION

In this article are set forth the results of an effort to learn the extent to which the immigrant, after coming to this country, utilizes his previous experience as an industrial or agricultural worker. Does a carpenter from the old country, for instance, work in this country as a carpenter, or does he find employment in some other occupation in which he cannot utilize his trade experience? Similarly, to what extent do agricultural laborers and farmers from the old country find agricultural employment in this country? As will be seen from the following pages, the problem does not lend itself to an easy solution.

The data used in the investigation were drawn from the following sources: (1) the reports of the United States Immigration Commission; (2) the United States censuses of 1880, 1890, 1900, and 1910; and (3) the reports of the Commissioner General of Immigration.

One of the difficulties encountered in the use of the census data was a perplexing lack of uniformity of occupational designations. To make matters somewhat more complicated, the occupations of arriving immigrants, as given in the reports of the Commissioner General of Immigration, are not classified in such a way as to make them readily comparable with the occupation groups of any of the censuses referred to. Owing to this lack of uniformity in classification of occupations, it was found to be impossible to include more than a few occupations.

In studying the data presented below, it should be remembered that the number of arriving immigrants reported does not represent the *net* increase of immigrants in the respective occupations. To secure the net increase it is necessary to deduct from the total arrivals the total number of immigrants in the respective occupations who departed during the decades studied. Owing to the fact that no figures for departing emigrants appear in the reports of the Commissioner General of Immigration until 1908, it is impossible to get at the exact increase of the occupational groups studied. Beginning with 1908, the number of departing immigrants, by occupation, is

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given annually in the reports of the Commissioner General of Immigration.

It was found desirable to divide the study into two sections, one dealing with agricultural laborers and farmers, the other with skilled industrial workers.

SECTION I

FOREIGN-BORN AGRICULTURAL LABORERS AND FARMERS IN THE UNITED STATES

It is generally conceded to be a fact that a considerable majority of immigrant agricultural laborers and farmers do not find employment in agricultural pursuits in the United States. A statement to the effect that not one in ten immigrant agricultural laborers settles on a farm in this country is found in the *Immigration Problem* by Jenks and Lauck (edition of 1917, p. 100). In his report on immigration to the United States Industrial Commission of 1900, Professor Commons says it is certain that a large proportion of immigrant *laborers* and *farm laborers* destined for Pennsylvania in 1900 found employment in the mines of that state.*

The following table (Table I) shows that in the year 1900 there were 259,294 foreign-born whites of both sexes engaged as farm laborers in this country. In 1910 the number of foreign-born white farm laborers was 336,753, an increase of 77,459 or 29.9 per cent. According to the reports of the Commissioner General of Immigration, 1,602,743 immigrant agricultural laborers, male and female, arrived in the United States between 1901 and 1910, both dates inclusive. From 1908 to 1914, however, 1.9 per cent as many farm laborers went back as came in, according to the report of the Commissioner General of Immigration. On this basis the net addition to the farm laborers may be estimated at 1,572,291. If all of these had actually engaged in agricultural pursuits in this country, the increase would have been 606 instead of 29.9 per cent. The per cent of farm laborers departing again must have been much larger than reported. The occupation given on departure is apparently that followed in this country, so that many whose training and experience in the old country were in agriculture return as skilled or unskilled workers in other occupations. In the years 1908-1914 the total number of departing immigrants amounted to 36.2 per cent of all arrivals. For skilled occupations, as indicated in Table V, the proportion of those going back is only about one-third as great (13.3 per cent for sixteen skilled occupations) as for all occupations. It is evident, therefore, (1) that the per cent

* Vol. 15, p. 389.

of farm laborers going back to the old country is larger than the per cent of those returning in all occupations, and (2) that returning immigrants report the occupation they followed in this country. Instead of 1.9 per cent of those who came in as farm laborers returning to the old country, an estimate of 50 per cent would probably be conservative. Assuming, therefore, that as many as half of the agricultural laborers returned, the increase in foreign-born farm laborers would have been over 300 per cent instead of 29.9 if they had all followed their former occupations. The actual increase was 77,459; the net addition by immigration is estimated at 801,371. Consequently, it would seem that not more than 10 per cent of immigrant farm laborers go into agricultural pursuits in this country.

TABLE I
NUMBER OF FOREIGN-BORN WHITES ENGAGED AS FARM
LABORERS IN THE UNITED STATES, BY SEX: 1900
AND 1910
(U. S. Census of 1910, vol. IV, p. 303; U. S. Census 1900, Special
Report on Occupations 1904, p. 11)

Sex	1910	1900	Increase 1900 to 1910
Males.....	308,360	253,895	21.5
Females.....	28,393	5,399	425.9
Both sexes.....	336,753	259,294	29.9

The Immigration Commission made a detailed study of 17,141 households, the heads of which were miners or wage-earners in manufacturing establishments. Table II shows that of the persons of these households for whom complete data were secured, 62 per cent of the males and 24.3 per cent of the females were employed as farm laborers or as farmers before coming to the United States. Table III shows

TABLE II
OCCUPATIONS BEFORE COMING TO THE UNITED STATES OF FOREIGN-BORN MALES
AND FEMALES WHO WERE 16 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER AT TIME OF COMING
(From Reports of Immigration Commission, vol. 19, pp. 89, 93, Study of Households)

Number reporting complete data	Per cent without occupa- tion	Per cent working for wages				Per cent working without wages		Per cent working for profit	
		Farm laborers	General laborers	Domes- tic service	All other occupa- tions	Farm laborers	All other occupa- tions	Farmers	All other occupa- tions
Males 21,696	3.2	20.3	2.9	....	27.8	28.6	.9	13.1	3.0
Females 13,315	59.7	7.3	....	8.4	6.8	16.4	.5	.6	.4

that of the members of the same households for whom complete data were secured, 0.1 per cent of the males and less than 0.05 per cent of the females were employed in agricultural pursuits in this country. It should be remembered, however, that the households studied by the Immigration Commission were those whose heads were engaged as miners or wage-earners in manufacturing establishments; consequently, it should not be expected that any considerable proportion of the members of these households would be employed in agricultural pursuits.

TABLE III

PER CENT OF FOREIGN-BORN MALES AND FEMALES 16 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER
ENGAGED IN SPECIFIED INDUSTRIES

(From Reports of Immigration Commission, vol. 19, pp. 101-102, Study of Households)

Number reporting complete data	Agricultural pursuits	Domestic and personal services	Manufacturing and mechanical pursuits	Mining	General labor	Professional services	Trade	Fishing	At home	At school	Transportation	Total
Males 25,727	.1	.8	67.9	25.0	1.3	.1	1.1	(*)	2.5	.2	1.0	100.0
Females 17,117	(*)	2.1	16.5	(*)	(*)	(*)	.5	.0	80.3	.4	(*)	99.8

* Less than 0.05 per cent.

The Immigration Commission also secured detailed information from groups of employees in mines and manufacturing establishments. Table IV shows that of the 181,330 male employees reporting complete data the larger proportion, about 54 per cent, were employed in the old country in farming or as farm laborers, while of the 12,968 female employees reporting complete data, 44 per cent were employed in the old country in farming or as farm laborers.

TABLE IV

PER CENT OF FOREIGN-BORN EMPLOYEES IN SPECIFIED OCCUPATIONS BEFORE
COMING TO THE UNITED STATES

(From Reports of Immigration Commission, vol. 19, pp. 95-98, Study of Employees)

Number reporting complete data	In manufacturing	Farming and farm labor	General labor	Domestic service	Sewing, embroidery and lace making	Teaching	Trade	Other occupations	Total
Males 181,330	15.3	53.9	10.3	....	....	....	2.5	18.1	100.1
Females 12,968	32.5	44.2	....	6.2	13.4	.7	1.8	1.4	100.2

SECTION II

HOW SKILLED IMMIGRANT WORKERS ARE EMPLOYED IN THE UNITED STATES

The data presented in the first part of this article show that a considerable majority of immigrant agricultural laborers and farmers do not follow their former occupations after coming to the United States. It was shown that of the members of the households studied by the Immigration Commission 62 per cent of the males and about 24 per cent of the females had been engaged as agricultural laborers and farmers in the old country; while in this country they were mainly employed in manufacturing and mining. It is apparent that any skill or experience in agricultural pursuits which these immigrants may have possessed is largely unutilized in this country. An analysis of the available data relating to skilled immigrant workers shows that a similar situation exists with regard to this class of foreign-born labor.

Table IV, based upon a study of employees engaged in this country in manufacturing and mining, shows that only 15.3 per cent of the males and 32.5 per cent of the females had had any experience in manufacturing before coming to the United States. It is evident, therefore, that about 84 per cent of the males and about 67 per cent of the females in this group were not utilizing such skill and experience as they may have acquired in the occupations they had been engaged in before coming to the United States.

The difficulties met with in attempting to compare the census data for specific occupations for the years 1900 and 1910 have been referred to above. After making a careful examination of all the occupational groups, sixteen have been selected for which the figures seem to be reasonably comparable for the two censuses. For these sixteen occupations, therefore, an effort has been made to learn what light the available statistics throw on the utilization of the immigrant's industrial skill and experience.

The method adopted is to compare the increase or decrease in the number of foreign-born reported for each occupation in 1910 with the number of immigrants belonging to the same occupation who arrived during the decade, as reported by the Bureau of Immigration. The result at best can be regarded as only approximately accurate. It is evident, however, that it is those who remain in the United States and not the total number of those who arrive that must be regarded as the new additions in each occupation.

As pointed out above, statistics of departures are not available prior to 1908, so that the number of foreign-born in each occupation returning during the decade can only be estimated. Comparing the figures

for arrivals and departures in each of the selected occupations during the period 1908-14, inclusive, it is found that 13.3 per cent of all who came went back to the old country, but that the per cent of departures varies greatly for the different occupations. Accordingly, in Table V the net addition of foreign-born in each occupation is found by deducting from total arrivals in the decade the per cent of departures in the years 1908-14. This process involves a slight error, varying in importance with the different occupations, since no account is taken of the fact that a certain number of those departing under one occupation classification came in under another. No estimate of the number of such cases can be given. Table V, therefore, assumes that all immigrants reported on departure the same occupation they gave on arrival. The result is that our estimate of the per cent of immigrants who abandon their former occupations (Table V, column 9) after reaching the United States is an under-estimate, for the reason that it includes only those who remained in the country.*

Table V summarizes the available data in regard to (1) the actual increase in the number of foreign-born engaged in each of the sixteen selected occupations, according to the census figures, and (2) the net additions to each of the sixteen occupations which could have resulted from immigrants arriving during the decade 1900 to 1910.

Special attention may be called to the facts revealed in Table V for each of the sixteen selected occupations. The table shows that in 1910 there were 5,964 more foreign-born white bakers than in 1900, an increase of 13.8 per cent. If all the bakers who arrived during the decade 1901-10, less the 15.2 per cent estimated to have returned in the same period, had followed their former occupation, the increase from 1900 to 1910 would have been 69.8 per cent. These figures seem to show that about 80 per cent of the bakers who arrived and remained in the United States between 1901 and 1910 went into other occupations.

In discussing the difficulties of classifying occupations, the census of 1910 (Vol. IV, p. 21) calls attention to the fact that in common with several other occupations, the number of bakers reported is excessive. The reason given is that ". . . in all those cases in which hand trades, through the introduction of machinery, the multiplication of processes, and the division of labor, have rather recently developed into factory industries, there was a marked tendency for the operatives to give the old trade names as their occupations, rather than the names

* This under-estimate is counterbalanced by the fact that no account is taken of the mortality rates in the respective occupations. Assuming a death-rate of twenty per cent in a decade for each occupation, the percentages of immigrants who abandoned their former occupations (Table V, col. 9) would be reduced by about twenty per cent. This, however, would not vitiate the general conclusions arrived at.

TABLE V
FOREIGN-BORN WHITES, BOTH SEXES, ENGAGED IN SPECIFIED OCCUPATIONS IN 1900 AND 1910, INCREASE 1900 TO 1910, AND THE
NUMBER OF WHITE IMMIGRANTS ARRIVING AND REMAINING IN THE UNITED STATES DURING 1901-10; AND THE PER CENT
ESTIMATED TO HAVE ABANDONED THEIR FORMER OCCUPATIONS

Occupations	Number engaged		Increase (or decrease) from 1900 to 1910		Number arriving 1901-10	Per cent departing 1908-14	Number remaining from those who arrived 1901-10	Number remaining 1901-10, expressed as per cent of total enumer- ated in 1900	Per cent of immigrants who abandoned their former occupations, 1901-10
	1900 (1)	1910 (2)	Number (3)	Per cent (4)					
Sixteen occupations	547,072	725,790	100,518	....	489,503	13.3	424,399	73.9	76.3
Bakers.	43,368	49,332	5,964	13.8	35,707	15.2	30,280	69.8	80.3
Barbers and hairdressers.	34,595	53,431	18,836	54.4	24,056	20.9	19,028	55.0	1.0
Blacksmiths.	62,950	66,956	4,006	6.4	44,637	9.8	40,263	64.0	90.1
Bookbinders.	5,911	5,356	-555	-9.4	4,359	5.4	4,124	69.8	100.0
Cabinetmakers	20,119	23,764	3,645	18.1	6,489	24.4	4,906	24.4	25.7
Carpenters and joiners.	152,897	213,788	60,891	39.8	126,830	14.9	107,932	70.6	43.6
Engravers.	2,916	3,214	298	10.2	1,239	13.0	1,078	37.0	72.4
Leather curriers and tanners.	19,909	6,591	-13,318	-66.9	6,240	9.6	5,641	28.3	100.0
Marble and stonecutters	24,312	17,798	-6,514	-26.8	16,057	18.6	13,070	53.8	100.0
Masons.	56,898	75,840	18,942	33.3	68,054	12.8	59,343	104.3	68.1
Painters, glaziers, and varnishers.	65,188	82,567	17,379	26.7	33,027	12.1	29,031	44.5	40.1
Plasterers.	9,218	14,368	5,150	55.9	4,926	20.9	3,896	42.3	0.0
Plumbers, gas and steam fitters.	18,717	29,849	11,132	59.5	4,899	11.3	4,345	23.2	0.0
Printers, lithographers, and pressmen.	23,290	22,625	-665	-2.9	7,583	10.5	6,787	29.1	100.0
Shoemakers and bootmakers	75,266	55,137	-20,129	-26.7	99,663	10.3	89,398	118.8	100.0
Saddlers and harness makers.	9,718	5,174	-4,544	-46.8	5,742	4.7	5,472	56.3	100.0

of specific processes they were performing." Consequently, there were undoubtedly in 1910 somewhat less than 49,332 foreign-born white bakers, for a large proportion of those who called themselves bakers were merely performing some specific process in which they did not utilize to the full extent their experience and training as bakers in the old country. Another factor here to be taken into consideration is that the introduction of machinery, the multiplication of processes, and the division of labor have made it possible for immigrants who formerly followed other occupations to become bakers. The increase of 5,964 foreign-born white bakers from 1900-1910 may therefore be due in part to foreign-born white workers of other occupations becoming bakers.

Of foreign-born white barbers and hairdressers there were 18,836 more in 1910 than there were in 1900, an increase of 54.4 per cent. Assuming that 20.9 per cent of all barbers and hairdressers who arrived during the decade left the country again and that those remaining all engaged in their former occupations the increase would have been 55 per cent. We may infer, therefore, that the increase of foreign-born white barbers and hairdressers from 1900 to 1910 was derived largely from immigrants of the same occupation who arrived during the decade and that a small number of the new immigrants went into other occupations.

In 1910 there were 66,956 foreign-born white blacksmiths, which represents an increase of 4,006, or 6.4 per cent, over 1900. During the years 1901 to 1910, inclusive, 44,637 white immigrant blacksmiths arrived in the United States. Assuming that 9.8 per cent of these left the country again, the increase of foreign-born white blacksmiths from 1900 to 1910 would have been about 64 per cent. In other words, only about 10 per cent of the blacksmiths assumed to have remained in the United States followed their former occupations.

There were 555 foreign-born white bookbinders less in 1910 than there were in 1900, a *decrease* of 9.4 per cent. If of the 4,359 bookbinders who arrived during the decade, 94.6 per cent, or 4,124, had followed their former occupations in the United States, the *increase* over 1900 would have been about 69.8 per cent.

Foreign-born cabinetmakers in 1910, as compared with 1900, showed an increase of 3,645, or 18.1 per cent. If 75.6 per cent of all the arriving cabinetmakers had followed their former occupations, the increase would have been about 24.4 per cent. Assuming that the increase was composed entirely of immigrants who had been cabinetmakers abroad, it appears that nearly 26 per cent of the cabinetmakers supposed to have remained in this country engaged in other occupations.

In 1900 there were 152,897 foreign-born white carpenters and joiners. In 1910 the number had increased to 213,788, including 566 carpenters' apprentices and 1,605 carpenters' helpers. The figure for 1900 probably also includes apprentices and helpers. The increase in 1910 over 1900 was 60,891, or 39.8 per cent. If of the 126,830 immigrant carpenters and joiners who arrived during the decade only 85.1 per cent, or 107,932, remained and followed their former occupations, the increase in 1910 over 1900 would have been 70.6 per cent. If the increase of 60,891 in 1910 over 1900 was composed entirely of immigrants who were carpenters and joiners abroad, and if of all the incoming immigrant carpenters and joiners only 107,932 remained, then only 56.4 per cent of all those who remained engaged in their former occupation.

Of foreign-born white leather curriers and tanners there were apparently 13,318 less in 1910 than there were in 1900, a decrease of 66.9 per cent. It appears that not only have the incoming leather curriers and tanners failed to take up their former occupations, but the larger proportion of those who in 1900 followed that occupation abandoned it between 1900 and 1910. It is probable that the marked decrease in this occupation is due to the fact that the census of 1910, as has been mentioned above, aimed to record the specific operation performed rather than the trade of the informant, so that those who were returned in 1900 as tanners were returned in 1910 under such occupations as "setters-out," "sorters," "shavers and scrapers," "splitters," "scrapers," etc. It is not possible, therefore, to compare the number of foreign-born whites engaged in tanneries in 1910 and in 1900. If this comparison were possible and if it were to show an increase in the total number of foreign-born whites employed in tanneries proportionate to the number of leather curriers and tanners who arrived during the decade, it still would not follow that the increase consisted of immigrants who were leather curriers and tanners abroad, or that if the increase did consist of these workers, they were utilizing the same degree of skill and experience required abroad in the same occupations.

The foreign-born marble and stone cutters also show a marked decrease in 1910 as compared with 1900. The 16,057 immigrant marble and stone cutters who arrived during the decade 1901-1910 had apparently no effect upon the number of foreign-born white marble and stone cutters in 1910.

The foreign-born white masons show an increase of 33.3 per cent in 1910 over 1900. If 87.2 per cent of all the white immigrant masons who arrived during the decade had remained in the United States and followed their former occupations, the increase in 1910 over 1900 would have amounted to 104.3 per cent.

The 82,567 painters, glaziers, and varnishers in 1910 includes 215 apprentices and 368 helpers, as well as 723 workers designated in the census of 1910 as "painters and gilders." The increase in 1910 as compared with 1900 was 26.7 per cent. If of the 33,027 painters, glaziers, and varnishers who arrived during the decade, 29,031, or 87.9 per cent, had remained and followed their former respective occupations, the increase in 1910 over 1900 would have been 44.5 per cent.

In 1910 there were 14,368 foreign-born white plasterers. This number includes 86 apprentices and 874 helpers. In 1900 the number of foreign-born white plasterers was 9,218, an increase of 55.9 per cent. If only 79.1 per cent of the incoming immigrant plasterers had remained in the United States and worked as plasterers, the increase would have been about 42.3 per cent. These figures seem to show that immigrants who followed other occupations (or no occupations) before coming into the United States became plasterers after their arrival in this country.

In 1900 there were 18,717 plumbers, gas and steam fitters, while in 1910 there were 29,849. Of this number 628 are given in the census of 1910 as plumbers' apprentices and 2,422 as plumbers' helpers. Since the 1910 census does not classify separately gas and steam fitters, it has been assumed here that these occupations were included under plumbers. The increase in 1910 over 1900 is 59.5 per cent. If the increase had consisted only of arriving plumbers, gas and steam fitters who remained in this country and had followed their former occupations, the increase would have been only 23.2 per cent. In this case, as in the case of the plasterers, it appears that immigrants who formerly, in the old country, followed other occupations became plumbers, gas and steam fitters in this country.

In 1900 there were 23,290 printers, lithographers, and pressmen. In 1910 there were 22,625, including 17,617 workers designated as compositors and typesetters, and 225 workers designated as press hands. During the decade 7,583 printers arrived. No separate class appears in the reports of the Commissioner General of Immigration for lithographers and pressmen, or presswomen. The decrease in this occupation was 2.9 per cent, though if all the arriving immigrant printers who remained had followed their former occupations, there would have been an increase of 29.1 per cent. Apparently, then, the immigrant printers who came to the United States during the decade took up other occupations.

Of the 55,137 shoemakers reported in 1910, 44,802 were not engaged in factories, while 10,335 were designated as shoemakers (not specified) in factories. Compared with 1900, the figure for 1910 represents a decrease of 20,129, or 26.7 per cent. If the 89,398 arriving immigrant

shoemakers who remained in the United States had followed their former occupation, there would have been an increase of 118.8 per cent. It appears, then, that the old country shoemaker drifts into some other occupation after his arrival in the United States; or if he finds employment in a modern shoe factory, he specializes in some specific process requiring little or none of the skill he possessed as shoemaker at home.

It is seen that in 1910 there were 4,544 saddlers and harness makers less than there were in 1900, a decrease of 46.8 per cent. If, however, all the immigrant saddlers and harness makers who arrived in this country during the decade and remained had followed their former occupation, 1910 would show an increase of 56.3 per cent over 1900.

It will be seen that of all the occupations considered, the plasterers, and the plumbers, gas and steam fitters, are the only groups which seem to have absorbed the total net immigration. The total number of immigrants in the sixteen occupations assumed to have remained here was 424,399, while the net increase of foreign-born in all the occupations considered was 100,518. In other words, taking these sixteen skilled occupations as a whole, only 23.7 per cent of those who came to the United States and did not return took up their former occupation; 76.3 per cent scrapped their skill and experience and took up some other trade.

Table VI shows the distribution of immigrants in nine industrial and two professional occupations for the decade 1880-90. This period was chosen rather than 1890-1900 because comparable data could not be secured for the latter. It will be seen that the immigrant clergymen, physicians and surgeons, carpenters and joiners, machinists, and tailors were fully absorbed by their former occupations, while the bakers, the blacksmiths, the butchers, the shoemakers, and the masons were not.

It should be pointed out that no reliable data are available as to the number of immigrants of each occupation returning during the decade 1880-90. It has been assumed that the proportion is the same as in the period 1908-14, though this is probably an overestimate. In Table VI as in Table V it is assumed that the increase in the respective occupations during the decade came entirely from new immigrants who had followed the same occupations abroad. On this basis it appears that the proportion of immigrants who abandoned their former occupations varied from zero in several cases to 65.7 per cent in the case of the shoemakers. The large increase of foreign-born machinists seems to indicate that the census returns included a considerable number of helpers and apprentices and perhaps other employees in machine

TABLE VI

FOREIGN-BORN, BOTH SEXES, ENGAGED IN SPECIFIED OCCUPATIONS IN 1880 AND IN 1890, INCREASE 1880 TO 1890, THE NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS ARRIVING AND THE ESTIMATED NUMBER REMAINING IN THE UNITED STATES DURING THE DECADE 1880-1890, AND THE PER CENT ESTIMATED TO HAVE ABANDONED THEIR FORMER OCCUPATIONS

(From U. S. Census 1880, vol. 10, pp. 744-51; U. S. Census 1900; special report on occupations pp. cxxxvii-cxxxix; Report of Commissioner General of Immigration 1892, pp. 44-50.)

Occupation	Number engaged		Increase 1880-1890		Per cent departing 1908-1914	Number remaining who arrived 1881-1890	Number remaining 1881-1890, expressed as per cent of total enumerated in 1880	Per cent of immigrants who abandoned their former occupations 1881-1890
	1880	1890	Number	Per cent				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Total of eleven occupations	540,470	830,584	290,114	....	25.1	209,334	38.7	0.0
Clergymen	12,751	18,387	5,656	44.4	27.2	2,573	20.2	0.0
Physicians and surgeons	8,579	11,185	2,606	30.3	31.4	1,546	18.0	0.0
Bakers	23,201	35,117	11,916	51.3	15.2	15,536	68.2	24.8
Blacksmiths	47,130	64,851	17,721	37.6	9.8	24,749	53.4	28.3
Butchers	29,230	38,993	9,763	33.4	12.6	15,556	53.2	27.2
Carpenters and joiners	85,691	160,006	74,315	86.7	14.9	54,862	64.0	0.0
Miners	126,235	195,438	69,203	54.8	117.8	25,547	36.8	65.7
Shoemakers	69,388	78,150	8,762	12.6	10.3	2,537	8.3	0.0
Machinists	30,458	57,457	26,999	88.6	30.2	26,527	73.2	7.2
Masons	36,246	60,867	24,621	67.9	12.8	26,824	73.2	0.0
Tailors	71,581	110,132	38,551	53.8	11.1	29,864	41.9	0.0

shops who were not skilled machinists. It is evident that a large number of immigrants previously engaged in other occupations during the decade 1880-90 entered such professions and occupations as clergymen, physicians and surgeons, carpenters and joiners, miners, machinists, and tailors.

The Immigration Commission in its study of immigrants in industry made inquiry as to the occupation and experience of the foreign-born before coming to this country. The results of this inquiry are presented in Table VII. The most striking fact revealed is the very small per cent of employees in certain industries who had been employed in the same occupation abroad. The proportion of farm laborers is high, but perhaps not so high as might be expected.

TABLE VII

EMPLOYEES AND HOUSEHOLDS STUDIED BY THE IMMIGRATION COMMISSION IN FIFTEEN PRINCIPAL INDUSTRIES, THE PROPORTION OF THE EMPLOYEES WHO WERE FOREIGN-BORN AND THE PERCENTAGES OF THE FOREIGN-BORN WHO HAD BEEN EMPLOYED AT THE SAME OCCUPATIONS OR HAD BEEN FARMERS OR FARM LABORERS ABROAD, BY INDUSTRY AND SEX

(From Abstracts of Reports of the Immigration Commission, vol. 1 pp. 297-313)

Industry	Number of employees from whom detailed information was secured	Number of households studied	Per cent of employees foreign-born	Per cent of foreign-born employees at same occupation abroad			Per cent of foreign-born employees who were farmers or farm laborers abroad		
				Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes
Iron and steel.....	86,089	2,456	57.7	....	....	8.6	....	....	64.4
Slaughtering and meat packing.....	43,502	1,039	60.7	5.1	0.5	....	58.4	82.8	....
Bituminous coal mining.....	88,368	2,371	61.9	....	....	20.7	....	....	58.0
Woolen and worsted mfg.....	23,388	440	61.9	22.1	41.9	....	42.4	34.5	....
Silk goods mfg. and dyeing.....	12,994	272	34.3	73.9	76.1	....	6.5	7.5	....
Cotton goods mfg.....	66,800	1,061	68.7	15.8	34.5	....	56.2	50.7	....
Clothing mfg.....	19,502	906	72.2	62.5	75.6	....	....	....	....
Boots and shoes.....	19,946	710	27.3	....	....	41.4	....	....	29.2
Furniture mfg.....	4,295	338	59.1	....	....	10.4	....	....	49.3
Collar, cuff and shirt mfg.....	1,508	264	13.4	....	3.6	....	....	35.7	....
Leather, tanning, currying and finishing.....	12,839	362	67.0	....	....	6.0	....	....	58.1
Glove mfg.....	908	262	33.5	60.9	14.4	....	21.2	5.5	....
Oil refining.....	6,123	525	66.7	0.0	0.0	....	....	....	60.8
Sugar refining.....	5,826	194	85.3	....	....	0.6	....	....	60.8
Cigars and tobacco.....	35,564	127	32.6	55.3	29.2	....	23.3	51.6	....

CONCLUSION

Although the lack of uniformity of occupational designations and the absence of satisfactory information with regard to the number of departing immigrants and their occupations make it impossible to take the above figures literally, the available statistics do, nevertheless, seem to show definitely that on the whole neither the immigrant agricultural workers nor the immigrant skilled workers follow their

former occupations to a large extent after coming to the United States. The fact that many occupations show an increase of foreign-born entirely disproportionate to the number of immigrants of the same occupation who came into the country, indicates that immigrants choose an occupation without much regard to their previous training and experience. This fact also suggests that special skill and training are not generally required of immigrants. It is probable that in occupations showing a disproportionate increase of foreign-born the immigrants in reality perform specific processes, though still parading under the general trade name. The large increase of tailors from 1880 to 1890, for example, shows that many immigrants learned the tailoring trade in this country in a much shorter time than it would have taken them to learn the same trade abroad. The division of labor and the multiplication of machinery referred to above have made it possible for many trades to employ immigrants regardless of their former training and experience and have probably, on the other hand, compelled many immigrants to abandon their previous occupations.

It has not been assumed in this study that it is to the best interests of the foreign-born or of society for the immigrant to engage in this country in the same occupation he followed abroad. Many immigrants leave the old country with the hope of finding in America an occupation more suitable for their health or tastes; others for the purpose of finding more lucrative employment.

If each skilled occupation in this country pays better wages than the corresponding occupation in the old country, it becomes necessary to regulate the influx of immigrants in these occupations in order to keep up the better wage. If this regulation is to be accomplished by those already in the trade, it probably requires a closed shop to exclude the new immigrant, thus compelling him to seek employment in another trade.

It is probable, by reason of our specialized industrial processes, that the number of skilled immigrant workers coming into this country is in excess of the number needed. From a social point of view, therefore, it need not follow that the skilled immigrant workers should engage in occupations which would enable them to utilize their acquired trade skill and training, or that skilled immigrants are more desirable than unskilled.

The fact, for instance, that apparently none of the 89,398 shoemakers who arrived during 1900-1910 and are assumed to have remained in the United States, engaged in their former occupations may be to the best interests of the shoemakers themselves as well as to the best interests of the country. The figures (Table V) show that there

was a decrease of foreign-born boot and shoemakers in 1910 as compared with 1900, amounting to about 27 per cent. If all the new shoemakers had found employment as shoemakers, there would have been an increase of more than one hundred per cent instead of the decrease of 27 per cent. The influx of shoemakers during that decade was obviously disproportionate to the needs of that particular industry, but probably was not in excess of the needs of all industries.